

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR SNOWE  
CHAIR, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS AND FISHERIES  
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION**

The hearing will come to order. Before we begin, I would like to welcome the witnesses, my colleagues, and others in attendance today.

Today's hearing will address the reauthorization of the Coastal Zone Management Act, or CZMA.

The United States has more than 95,000 miles of coastline along the Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic Oceans, Gulf of Mexico, and the Great Lakes. Nearly 53 percent of all Americans live in these coastal regions that account for only 11 percent of the country's total land area. This small portion of the country supports approximately 200 sea ports, contains most of our largest cities, and serves as critical habitat for a variety of plants and animals.

Further, it is expected that the U.S. coastal population will reach 165 million people in the year 2015, up from 110 million in 1990. With this rise in population, there will be a tremendous increase in the demands that are placed both on coastal resources and infrastructure.

To help meet these challenges, Congress enacted the Coastal Zone Management Act in 1972. The CZMA provides incentives to states to develop comprehensive programs that balance the many competing uses of coastal resources and to meet the needs for the future growth of coastal communities.

So far, 32 of the 35 eligible coastal states and U.S. territories have federally approved plans. Two of the remaining eligible states are currently completing their plans. I am proud to say that my state of Maine has had a federally approved plan since 1978. The approved plans encompass 99% of the eligible U.S. coastline.

As a voluntary program, the framework of the CZMA provides guidelines for state plans to address multiple societal, cultural, economic and environmental objectives. This allows the states the flexibility necessary to prioritize management issues and utilize existing state regulatory programs and statutes wherever possible.

As an incentive for their participation, the states receive federal funds to help implement these programs. The states provide matching funds for many of

these activities.

Under CZMA, states with approved plans also have the right to review federal actions to ensure that they are consistent with state policies.

The coastal zones managed under CZMA are quite varied. They range from the arctic to tropical islands, from sandy to rocky shorelines, and from urban to rural areas. They include wetlands, estuaries, beaches, and coral reefs. Because of these varying habitats and resource types, management issues differ from state to state. No two state plans are the same.

Likewise, there are multiple uses of the coastal zone. Coastal managers are asked to strike a balance among residential, commercial, recreational and industrial development; harbor development and maintenance; controlling shoreline erosion; and commercial and recreational fishing. Coastal programs address these competing needs for resources, steer activities to appropriate areas of the coast, and attempt to minimize the effects of these activities on coastal resources.

As you may imagine, being able to balance economic development while protecting public resources requires the cooperative efforts of the federal government, the coastal states, local jurisdictions, nongovernmental organizations, and the public. There are many of these partnerships working together within the state coastal programs.

An excellent example of this collaborative approach can be found in the Maine Coastal Program. During the fall of 1996, they conducted an intensive outreach effort to gauge public opinion about coastal issues and needs. The results of this effort have been used to shape priority areas for the program through the year 2000. I am sure that our witnesses will be providing us with more interesting examples of how the states have tailored the CZMA to address their needs.

Another component of the CZMA is the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. These reserves not only provide habitat for a wide variety of fish, invertebrates, birds, and mammals, they also serve as natural laboratories for research and education. There are currently 22 of these reserves in 18 states.

I am happy to say that one of these reserves is in Wells, Maine. The Wells Reserve conducts a broad array of salt marsh ecological research and has even held a symposium on this subject to aid coastal managers in the decision-making process.

Education and outreach are also a priority at the Wells Reserve. Every year thousands of the students participate in educational activities both at the reserve and over the internet. I look forward to hearing more about the activities in Wells and in the other reserves.

The CZMA authorization expires at the end of the current fiscal year. The 1999 reauthorization of the CZMA provides us with a unique and well-positioned opportunity to provide a vision and a framework for coastal and ocean resource management into the next century.

We have assembled an excellent slate of witnesses to advise the Committee on the best course of action, and I look forward to your testimony.